



Vol 1.5

Letter from the Editor

Brothers and Sisters,

I want to recognize that we are in a New Year, 2017 brings new life and momentum into the movement. This being the first edition of our No Shackles Newsletter for the year. The march on Washington D.C. is no longer an event planned for next year, we are swiftly approaching the time where the voice and role of every supporter, organizer, prisoner, activist and everyone involved is critical in our organizing.

As we reflect on the change in presidency, we begin this edition focusing on the legacy of Barack Obama in relation to incarceration. Obama, being the first president in decades to leave office with a decrease in the prison population. This decrease, although not staggering is significant in that it is reminiscent of our country's growing concern with evils of the mass-industrial prison complex. Obama was also the first sitting president to visit a correctional institution in 2015 at the El Reno prison in Oklahoma City. As of December 2016 he's also carried out 1,324 pardons. We can see in this trend of increased presidential activity in prisons, that our sleeping masses are awakening. Regardless I argue that Obama's commitment to longstanding criminal justice reform is more symbolic than notable. A president who completely disregards the will of the people, impoverished and communities of color, that organized in boatloads to vote him into office, is no more than the political puppet of any other president. We see that when politicians choose temporary case-by-case deals over establishing permanent solutions, those can be easily undone and overturned. This is the primary fear of those residing in Trump's America. We must not forget that this America (regardless of who sits as president) continues to function with legalized slavery as it's backbone. Now are organizing in order to pull the backbone out of the beast. We have nothing left to lose but our chains.

In solidarity,
Amani Sawari (@SawariMi)



iamWE Prison Advocacy Network

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JLS *The 13th Amendment to the Constitution declared that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."*

JLS Section:

Feeding the prison system: Some inmates buy way around 'institutional cooking'

December 14, 2016 | Hanna Raskin | <http://www.postandcourier.com>

On the first day of the sixth week of the South Carolina Department of Corrections' master menu cycle, inmates across the state have a slice of mixed meat bologna for lunch.

A man may have been sent to Kershaw for writing bad checks, to Lee for fatally shooting a stranger or to Tyger River for dealing cocaine. Regardless of his crime, on a recent Monday morning, he was served a tray that looked very much like the one I faced at Kirkland, where I'd gone to learn more about food service in the state's prisons.

Only four of the plastic tray's six molded compartments were occupied. In addition to the warmed-over round of bologna streaked with a half-inch band of gray, there was a sour-smelling heap of macaroni salad, two misshapen pieces of bread and shredded iceberg lettuce.

"How is that?" asked support services division director Mark McCown, one of four Department of Corrections staff members who joined me in the mess hall. None of them ate there. Nodding his head knowingly, McCown continued, "You probably want mayonnaise for the bread, salt for the macaroni and salad dressing for the salad."

Or as the department's food service administrator, Willie Smith, put it: "The reality of it is we do institutional cooking, and that's bland cooking. We don't season. We don't cook it like momma used to cook it."

Canteen is cooking Plain meals are the norm behind bars. But according to the master menu, which prison food directors are instructed to follow faithfully, there actually was supposed to be mayonnaise, mustard and sliced tomato on the tray. When I later e-mailed Smith about the omission, he assured me the overlooked items would be served with dinner "to ensure nutritional standards are met."

It's impossible to infer from one instance of missing condiments how frequently prison kitchens deviate from the state's meal plan, which was designed to fulfill the minimum daily dietary requirements established by the federal government. Officials say they're aware of the health and behavioral risks associated with underfeeding inmates, and maintain incarcerated men and women receive a sufficient amount of clean, safe and nourishing food. Inmates, on the other hand, claim their welfare is secondary to budgetary and security concerns, resulting in meals that undermine their physical strength and mental resolve.

Still, formal complaints to the Department of Health and Environmental Control are few. It's possible that's because inmates with the financial ability to do so have essentially opted out of the food service



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system, purchasing everything they eat from the prison canteen. “I can’t tell you what percentage, but I can tell you there’s a lot of (that),” canteen manager Eddie Huddle said.

According to S.C. Department of Corrections data, about half of the state’s 20,652 imprisoned offenders shop the canteen on a weekly basis, spending a total of almost \$17 million over the course of a year, with any profits going back into the agency’s coffers. That figure includes batteries, toilet paper, curling irons, tennis shoes and chess sets, but it also encompasses four different kinds of Girl Scout cookies, frozen chicken wings, barbecue pork rinds, frosted strawberry Pop-Tarts, jalapeno cheese sandwiches and kosher pickles, among many other food items.

To put that statistic in perspective, the Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2016 spent nearly \$16 million on food. The exact number works out to \$2.07 per inmate per day.

“I don’t eat that prison food,” said a Lieber Correctional Institute inmate contacted through Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, a national human rights organization that supports prisoners. “The guys on what they call lockup, they’re the ones who mostly fall victim to that. Me personally, I would have to be rock bottom with no choice at all to eat that.”

On the farm South Carolina is unusual in handling its own food program. Aramark, one of the leading prison food suppliers, has contracts with approximately 600 facilities across the country, which represents a portfolio 30 times the size of the S.C. Department of Corrections.

But it’s unclear exactly how many states currently outsource all or part of their prison food service. The Bureau of Justice Statistics, Federal Bureau of Prisons and National Institute of Corrections don’t track spending on prisoner meals, and the American Corrections Association and the Association of State Correctional Administrators were similarly unable to provide information.

Fifteen years ago, though, when the Bureau of Justice Statistics last tallied up state prison expenditures, South Carolina’s food costs per inmate were less than half of the national average. Prison Policy Initiative executive director Peter Wagner warns those numbers are slippery, because accounting isn’t standardized, but South Carolina’s per inmate spending exceeded that of only six other states, five of them in the South.

“We are constrained by the budget, so we try to do as much as we can with as little as we can,” Department of Corrections director Bryan Stirling said.

According to Stirling, the state saves a significant amount of money by producing its own eggs, milk and grits: The S.C. Department of Corrections is home to 140,000 chickens.

“We teach the offenders how to work with the cows and how to do a hard day’s labor,” he said.

Inmates also staff the kitchens. The department recently instituted a ServSafe certification program, thus far positioning almost 200 inmates to pursue food service work after leaving prison.

As for the farm, officials would like to expand it, especially since the agency can make extra money by selling off surplus product. But McCown said they’re thwarted by the prisons’ storage capabilities. As



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much as he would like to add collards or other vegetables to the repertoire, facilities built before the prison population surged can't accommodate the quantity of fresh produce required to feed inmates.

And prisons aren't just short on space. Severe understaffing is a perpetual problem. To cut down on guard shifts, the Department of Corrections has consolidated its three daily meals into two on weekends, so prisoners now start Saturdays and Sundays with "brunch."

Maggot-infested cornmeal The abbreviated meal service is a far cry from the "three hots and a cot" image of prison that prevailed in the early 20th century, when malnutrition was a pressing problem throughout the South.

Although prisoners have always taken exception to provided meals — a violent prison riot in Michigan in the 1950s was settled only after officials acceded to demands for a steak-and-ice cream dinner — wardens for many years made sure to mark holidays with sumptuous feasts. The Charleston Evening Post in 1956 reported that residents of the county's prison farm would "dine royally" for Christmas on roast chicken, roast pork, dressing, rice-and-giblet gravy, green peas, cabbage, cranberry sauce, mincemeat pie, fruit and candy.

According to longtime inmates, even after South Carolina prisons scaled back their seasonal festivities, daily meals regularly featured ingredients that didn't come from a can. "When I first came to prison, guys used to talk about salad bars," the Lieber inmate said. "They used to have fruit on the regular line."

Fruit has been mostly struck from prison diets, "because male inmates like to make something called buck," Huddle said, referring to prison wine. In officials' estimation, vegetables pose an additional security risk, since it's relatively easy to slip contraband into food that wasn't packaged up and sealed at a faraway factory.

Otherwise, though, Smith claims complaints about food service are somewhat exaggerated. Inmates may like to speculate about which creatures they're eating in the guise of meatloaf or sloppy Joes, but all of the meat served in the state's prisons is USDA-inspected, he points out.

"It might not look the best, but it is nutritionally the best," he said. "When the inmates compose them pictures and send them out there on those illegal cell phones, they are the ones composing the pictures, not us. When the inmate is locked down, and we send food to their living area, he or she can do anything they want with it and make the picture look any way they want it to look."

Earlier this year, a prisoner surreptitiously shot a video of maggots crawling through cornmeal at Turbeville Correctional Institution. Circulated in conjunction with the nationwide prison strike on Sept. 9, the 27-second video has been viewed 195,000 times.

"These are the bugs that are found in the cornmeal for the last few weeks," the video's unseen narrator bellows. "South Carolina prison: This is what they're feeding us."

Nutritional value Two months after the video was posted, word of it still hadn't reached Stirling, the Department of Corrections director. His experiences in prison mess halls have been considerably more benign:



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"I will sit down and I'll eat the meal and you know, one place I went, the cornbread was dry," he said. "So I called the warden and said, 'The cornbread was dry, what's the deal?' She called the head food service worker at the institution. He said, 'Well, I tried something different today and it didn't work out.' I forget what he did, I'm not a cook. But then I actually went back later, and it was better."

A Department of Health and Environmental Control inspector on Oct. 24 "partially verified" a complaint regarding maggots in the grits at Ridgeland Correctional Institution. Although she didn't see any maggots, "small live bugs similar to weevils were observed in a bag of dry grits."

In February, another inspector came across dead bugs in the grits at Leath Correctional Institution.

Still, the vast majority of violations recorded in the latest round of prison kitchen inspections involved holding temperatures for food, as well as aging facilities and equipment; prisons were marked down for peeling walls and cracked pitchers. Inspectors also noted code violations by inmates, such as eating sausages while preparing food. "It's not like the restaurant business, where you get someone's that been working there for five years," McCown said.

Overall, though, every prison is currently rated within DHEC's acceptable range: The average score statewide is 96.76.

DHEC monitors sanitation, not nutrition, which is the province of two full-time Department of Corrections employees. But after independently plugging the agency's sample menus into a dietary analysis program, Coastal Carolina University's health promotion professor Sharon Thompson became concerned. She and a student in 2012 co-authored "What Are We Feeding Our Inmates?" published in the Journal of Correctional Health Care.

"We did find the meals had a lot of problems, as far as being high in cholesterol and sodium, and low in potassium, magnesium and Vitamin E," Thompson said. "All of those are protective against heart disease, stroke and cognitive decline. So the dietary offerings may be inexpensive to purchase, but someone's going to be paying for medical care."

Thompson added, "This is a population that maybe people think deserves bad food. But the health consequences eventually may affect all of us."

Prison doctors have already ordered therapeutic diets for approximately 2,900 inmates in connection with diagnoses ranging from cardiovascular disease to diabetes. When other inmates are dining on chili macaroni and cornbread, for example, the chow line designated for therapeutic dieters features sauteed poultry, steamed rice and spinach.

If an inmate on a therapeutic diet misses more than one out of every five meals, the prison's medical authorities are alerted. "Oh, that definitely happens," Smith said of chronic absenteeism in the cafeteria.

The Department of Corrections is bound to prepare enough food so every inmate can eat. The leftovers are "reracked," meaning they can be served again and again for the next seven days, so the system doesn't lead to a staggering amount of waste. But there only a few meals on the master menu guaranteed to draw a crowd.



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“Thanksgiving; Christmas; hot dogs; anything Fourth of July related,” Smith, said, ticking off the inmates’ favorites. (Chicken used to be a big deal back when it was fried, but it’s now served teriyaki style.) “We have what we call the Big Mac meal. If they come in and for some reason, the hamburgers are gone, that’s when they get upset: When those popular meals appear, we feed everyone.”

But when dinner is poultry gravy or chicken livers, inmates are apt to eat “set-up,” a meal improvised from canteen purchases. “They take a soup, and they add whatever meat they want, like sausage or chicken or whatever, and hot sauce,” Huddle said of the ramen-based cuisine.

While Thompson can appreciate the appeal of salty foods, she said years of subsisting on convenience foods can take a toll.

“They did a study on cruise ships, and found if people even have a week where they eat sugar and saturated fat, it can take a few months for your body to recover,” she said. “It’s not necessarily something where you get out of prison and you’re automatically back to normal a week later.”

Yet the Lieber inmate said short of coaxing a warden into creating special programs at which refreshments are served, eating from the canteen represents the only viable way of attaining desirable flavors and nutrients. It’s a luxury not available to every inmate, though. Inmates are no longer given opportunities to earn money while in prison, so they’re dependent on friends and relatives to deposit money into their canteen accounts.

“Some guys’ families are a little more fortunate,” the inmate said.

Black-market salad Inmates are permitted \$150 in spending money per week, with the cap bumped up to \$175 during the holidays. Families also can order care packages at certain times during the year, such as Easter, when the standard list of canteen items is supplemented with treats such as chocolate bunnies.

Any inmate who has less than \$6.43 in his or her account is considered indigent, and granted a hygiene package with items such as razors. As for self-funding inmates, they can spend their money as they choose. The department marks up the wholesale prices it pays by 35 percent, meaning a canned soda retails for 55 cents. An inmate would pay around 40 cents for a package of crackers.

Just as the meals served in the mess hall have evolved in deference to security concerns, so has the list of foods available through the canteen. In the 1980s, inmates could buy a five-pound sack of sugar. Today, the threat of illicit hooch-making is considered so serious that male inmates are barred from ordering V8. The vegetable drink remains on the canteen list for women, because they’re not prone to distilling liquor, Huddle said.

“They like to cook, and they’re good cooks,” he said.

That means they’ll request vanilla wafers to crush up for pie crust, which they’ll fill with melted Hershey bars and top with cream.



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Canteen items are so central to prison life that a Canadian supplier recently started an online store for its Whole Shabang potato chips, previously sold exclusively in prison canteens. As NBC News this fall reported, former convicts have created Facebook pages in the chips' honor and schemed to smuggle them out of prison.

Yet ramen-style soups remain South Carolina's bestseller, although Huddle said they aren't used as currency, a phenomenon documented earlier this year by a University of Arizona doctoral student in sociology. Michael Gibson-Light found inmates pay other inmates in ramen to clean their bunks or wash their clothes.

In South Carolina, Huddle said, that kind of swapping occurs primarily when an inmate is put on "restriction," meaning he or she can only buy hygiene items or a padlock from the canteen. Typically, those are traded for food, such as instant grits or beef stew.

But the Lieber inmate confirms there is a thriving black market for vegetables in the state's prisons.

"A guy's underground hustle may be to make salad," he said. "Real good salad, with lettuce, tomatoes and carrots. He may sell it to you for \$4 or \$5, and it would be worth it."

Slavery, The 13th Amendment, And Mass Incarceration: A Response To Patrick Rael

December 15, 2016 | TWC | <http://www.theweeklyphichallenger.com>

This post is a rebuttal to Patrick Rael's "Demystifying the 13th Amendment and Its Impact on Mass Incarceration."

Dear Professor Rael,

I just finished your article, "Demystifying the 13th Amendment" regarding Ava DuVernay's documentary "13th," and I am (pun intended) completely mystified at your thesis given that you are someone who seems to be a serious historian. While we may take issue with certain of the moves that are made in the film, such as what some have described as its use of outdated statistics and an over-emphasis on the private prison industry at the expense of analyzing the public prison system which is in fact the core of the prison industrial complex, the main pivot of the film in respect to the exception clause is in fact uncontroversial when one looks at the actual history of racialized incarceration in the US. Indeed, this history, as Angela Davis, George Jackson, and Assata Shakur remind us, actually started for Africans aboard slave ships, in slave pens, and on slave plantations.

And, this is not just a point made by politically imprisoned Black radical intellectuals. US jurisprudence has avowed the connection in no uncertain terms at many junctures – even after the moment that you



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say a clear line had been drawn between slavery and imprisonment. Just listen to J. Christian, a Virginia Supreme Court Justice in 1871, in *Ruffin v Commonwealth*, a case that allowed for the enslavement of prisoners, in which he states that the prisoner has “as a consequence of his crime, not only forfeited his liberty, but all his personal rights He is for the time being the slave of the state. He is civiliter mortuus [civilly dead]; and his estate, if he has any, is treated like that of a dead man.” What this makes apparent is that your statement that “the law had long distinguished between slavery and incarceration” by the end of the Civil War, is categorically wrong. No such clear distinction had even been made for white prisoners (Ruffin in this case was actually a white man), but the law definitely had made no such distinction in respect to Africans whom the law had defined as sub- to non-human for hundreds of years before the Ruffin decision.¹

What Ruffin expresses in boldface terms; and, more importantly, what the experience of Black imprisonment has revealed from the Convict Lease Camp, to the chain gang, to the prison plantation, to the modern penitentiary, is that systems of modern incarceration cannot be disentangled from their moorings in the original systems of mass racialized incarceration that Black people endured during chattel slavery such as the slave pen, the slave ship, and the plantation. That is, despite your attempt at refuting the slavery/imprisonment nexus in your addressing of the exception clause in the 13th Amendment, your analysis reveals a severely flawed conceptualization of the reach, purpose, and consequence of this most damaging moment of liberal racism in U.S. legal history. I happen to know more than a little in respect to the subject. I have written an entire chapter on the exception clause in my recent book, *Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary*.

Dennis Childs' *Slaves of the State* 2015) It is shocking that in order to prove your point you draw upon the very moment in the Congressional record that actually proves the opposite of what you argue in your article. When Charles Sumner took part in the Congressional debate around the wording of the amendment he did so because he feared that the wording would do much more than create what you describe as “confusion” if passed with language re-legalizing slavery as punishment for a crime. And the reason why he made such a point at Congress in arguing against the exception clause was that he knew that the former Confederacy could use it as a legal means to re-enslave the African population under color of law.

Indeed, members of the former confederacy were not “confused” at all about the way in which the exception clause offered cover for Black re-enslavement. This is indicated in parts of the congressional record you must be unaware of such as that offered in regard to the Black Codes in which a southern clergyman said in his testimony that “we must now make a code that will subject as many crimes to the penalty of involuntary servitude, and so reduce the Negroes under such penalty again to practical slavery.” Carl Schurz also expounded upon this at length after his tour of the southern states.

When Charles Sumner argued for not having a “slavery as punishment for a crime” clause in the 13th Amendment he may have felt there was a clear distinction between the systems in the North in respect to White prisoners, but he knew full well that any such distinction would fall apart at the seams when southern and national white supremacist law set its sights on a newly freed Black population that was said to be only productive at the spur of plantation style punishment. This fear was corroborated nearly two years after the 13th Amendment was passed when Sumner came to Congress armed with a copy of the *Annapolis Gazette*, and unveiled a slave auction advertisement from one of its pages dated December 1866. The advertisement read: “Public sale. The undersigned will sell at the Court House Door



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in the city of Annapolis at 12 o'clock, Monday, on Saturday, 8th December, 1866, a negro man named Richard Harris ... convicted at the October term, 1866 ... for larceny and sentenced by the court to be sold as a slave. Terms of sale, cash. William Bryan, Sheriff Anne Arundel County."

Acquired by author from unpublished congressional digest. Public domain. For this county sheriff / neo-slave auctioneer there was a decided lack of what you call "confusion" about the re-enslaving function of the exception clause vis-a-vis Africans in the US. Your point that "the law had long distinguished between slavery and incarceration" is actually factually wrong even in relationship to White prisoners until at least as late as the 1820s (the prison Sing Sing was built by white prisoners who were spurred to build the prison by being whipped by a warden who fashioned himself as prison slave master). However, to reiterate, even as the long standing interconnected positionalities of prisoner and slave had begun to diminish for White prisoners by 1865, there was no such clear distinction for those who had been defined as human commodities at law for generations. In fact the Annapolis auctioning of Black prisoners as slaves under the cover of an exception clause had been in practice in Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana up to the eve of the Civil War, and the County Sheriff knew full well that there was nothing in the 13th Amendment which would keep him from continuing this practice.

The fact is that this sale of Black prisoners as slaves in Maryland and other states was but a drop in the bucket when we consider the way in which courthouses in general in the former Confederacy became virtual auction blocks with both private concerns and state governments capitalizing on the fact that slavery remained legal as punishment for a crime. The horrific conditions Black people experienced under convict leasing, chain gangs, and prison plantations were in fact refabrications of slavery that were allowed to exist after 1865 because of the exception clause, the Black Codes, and other legal maneuvers. And this is not a "theoretical opinion" — this is what the testimony of Black prison slaves from 1865 to the present screams out!

A Southern chain gang. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division) As an historian I am frankly surprised by the fact that you have somehow managed to miss the entire historical literature on the post-Civil War turn to prison slavery including books by authors such as David Oshinsky (*Worse than Slavery*), Alex Lichtenstein (*Twice the Work of Free Labor*), everything by Angela Davis on what she calls the transition from "the prison of slavery to the slavery of prison," Sarah Haley (*No Mercy Here*), Talitha LeFlouria (*Chained in Silence*), and Douglas Blackmon (*Slavery by Another Name*). All of these works — as well as my own — express the way in which white supremacist law refabricated slavery in both "old" and updated forms using the exception clause as legal cover. The fact is that a major catalyst of southern industrialization after the Civil War was a product of neo-slave labor in the form of convict leasing, chain gangs, and prison plantations.

It is also particularly amazing to me that you actually attempt to say that there is a clear distinction between chattel slavery — or what you call an "old labor regime" — and what you call a "new" labor regime like convict leasing. First, such a move plays into the long-standing liberal white supremacist notion that slavery was an exceptional blip on the radar screen of U.S. modernity rather than a constitutive component of that modernity. Secondly, and more importantly, this argument reveals a patent lack of awareness of the actual conditions endured by Africans who were leased to private companies like U.S. Steel, and Tennessee Coal and Iron — or who were sent to chain gangs and prison plantations.



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Many convict lease camps such as “Smithonia,” a 20,000 acre neo-plantation that was owned by Confederate Colonel James Smith were operated by former slave owners. They used many of the very same punishment and terrorism methods in the late 19th Century and into the 20th Century that they used before the Civil War. Early prison slaves were subjected to many “old-style” punitive methods (along with modern innovations of racial terrorism) that were born on the slave plantation: these included legally unredressable rape, whipping, chaining over long distances (or what in “old” parlance was called “the coffle”), slave ship style “tight packing” in mobile chain gang boxcars, mauling by bloodhounds, coerced musical and theatrical performance, and outright murder.

But don’t take my word for it. Here is testimony from a woman named Mentha Morrison in a letter that she wrote to Pres. Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 with respect to the regime of imprisonment that her husband Jackson Morrison received at “Smithonia” as a result of being unable to pay a fine in court: “He was sentenced to the chain gang in 1901 ... and sold to Col. James Smith on Nov. 30th 1901 ... Col. Smith inflicts inhuman punishment on the person of his convicts, and whips them unmercifully . . . Mr. President I appeal to you to do something for my husband. Will you please cause an investigation of that Camp ... it will be found that there are numbers of persons (both men and women) serving as slaves there...” With all due respect, your attempt to argue that forms of racialized imprisonment such as convict leasing, the chain gang, and the prison plantation “stopped short of actual slavery” rings problematic at best when held up to the light of such testimony by the actual Black people that experienced prison slavery.

And my points are not limited to “old” forms of neoslavery that occurred from 1865 to World War II. Are you going to tell me that today, when we have Black men from places like New Orleans East being currently sent to Angola prison plantation, an 18000 acre slave plantation that became the state penitentiary of Louisiana (and the largest maximum security prison in the country) after the Civil War, and are made to pick cotton and soybeans in the same slave plantation fields that their ancestors did going back to the 18th Century that it “stops short” of actual slavery? I think such a claim would be difficult to hold on to if you were to have a conversation with someone like Robert King Wilkerson or Albert Woodfox, two of the “Angola 3” who spent 30 and 43 years in solitary confinement at Angola neo-plantation because they worked as Black Panthers to try to stop prison rape and plantation field work at Angola.

My points are also not limited to areas south of the Mason-Dixon. I think your claims about a stark slavery/imprisonment distinction would also be hard to maintain for those across the country who just recently organized one of the biggest prison strikes in US history against conditions that they refer to as prison slavery. From the prisoners’ perspective neoslavery is not simply about forced labor nor about what happens in the supposedly exceptional white supremacist south: it is about a systematic program of dehumanization, physical torture, spatial entombment, familial dislocation, white supremacist ideology, forced relocation (i.e. kidnapping), the forced sterilization of Black and Brown women prisoners, shackled births, and the de facto punishment of sexual slavery, all of which amount to what Saidiya Hartman would refer to as the most boldface “afterlives” of the original system of mass incarceration known as slavery. It is not necessary for us to fall into the trap of the liberal white progress narrative in order for us to see the specificity of our current moment of racial capitalist injustice. I think we can be attentive to what Amiri Baraka describes as the “changing same” or what Du Bois described as “old wine in new bottles” in seeing that the present prison industrial complex is informed at its core by America’s original prison industrial complex: chattel slavery.



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I wish to be clear that none of this is meant to say that chattel slavery and prison slavery are exactly the same. Rather, it is to point out that any attempt to treat of slavery and “mass incarceration” as distinct falls flat in the face of history and the present day catastrophe that is the prison industrial complex. Imprisoned and formerly imprisoned voices such as those of Mentha Morrison, Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, the Angola 3, James Yaki Sayles, George Jackson, the 30,000 members of the historic California Prison Hunger Strike of 2013, are all in a much better position to comment on the relationship of chattel slavery and mass incarceration than anyone who has never been encaged inside one of the neo-plantations known as prisons that currently imprison well over 2 million people. What these voices reveal, if listened to, is a concerted demand that we pay close attention to the ways in which the chattel slavery principle has infused the predicament of Black freedom from the moment of its legal birth.

AUTONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE MISSION (A13-AIM)

January 5, 2017 | Scott Malone | <http://www.reuters.com/>

Amend The 13th Autonomous Infrastructure Mission (AIM)

Legal slavery in Amerika is grounded in the foundation of poverty, inequality, economic desperation, racial hatred, educational underdevelopment. These social ills breed the community instability which gives rise to the criminalization of our people, upon which the prison-industrial slave complex (PISC) is based.

The primary aim of Amend The 13th is not legislative. The slave provision of the 13th Amendment could be stricken tomorrow. But if the institutions, which have preserved legal slavery in Amerika continue to be the primary basis of the infrastructure in our communities, the social ills they inevitably produce will continue to perpetuate defacto ‘legal’ dehumanization and exploitation.

If we are to eliminate the basis of legal slavery in Amerika, we must develop our own Autonomous Infrastructure, capable of diminishing the criminalization, which fuels imprisonment – an infrastructure built for us, of us and by us.

To that end, the Amend The 13th Autonomous Infrastructure Mission (AIM) is the backbone of our movement to abolish legal slavery in Amerika.

The origin of crime is the disproportionate distributions of wealth, access and opportunity in society. If the origin of legal slavery is criminalization, and the origin of criminalization is disorganizing poverty-stricken communities, the solution is to eradicate the poverty and disorganization of our communities through our own autonomous infrastructure. One capable of meeting our basic needs, while increasing the wealth and prosperity in our communities.

The Amend The 13th Autonomous Infrastructure Mission – or A13 AIM – will provide each community with a functional blueprint and structure to forge our own social, economic, educational, agricultural, political, self-defense and emergency response infrastructure, which are independent of the state and wholly self-reliant.



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Each initiative of the AIM is designed to work in interconnection. Much like different mechanisms of a machine are brought together to form a complex system, the various initiatives of the AIM come together to form a single Autonomous Community-based Infrastructure.

Unlike other well-intended but ultimately ill-effective community development efforts, which are reliant on activists coming from outside the community to implement these programs, the A13-AIM relies almost exclusively on staff and participants drawn from activists and volunteers from that community to implement its initiative. This reliance on indigenous staffing will ensure that the development of the AIM is responsive to the unique conditions on the ground in that community. This approach will also ensure deeper trust, broader participation, and a vested interest in the success of these efforts by the community as a whole.

The primary initiatives of the Amend The 13th-AIM will include:

- The Sustainable Agricultural Commune (S.A.C.)
- The Closed Circuit Economic Initiative (C.C.E.I.)
- The Youth Community Action Program (Y.C.A.P.): A cultural institution for mentorship will be developed within the YCAP
- The New Afrikan Maths and Science Centers Initiative
- Emergency Response Network (ERN)
- Community Safe-Zones Initiative (CSZI)
- Secure Communities Mandate (SCM)

Each of these communities will be mutually supportive, yet independently developed, as the periods of maturation for some of these efforts differ from others. For example: some are long range efforts, like the C.C.E.I., while others are short-range efforts and can almost immediately be implemented, such as the S.A.C.

for more information you can email us at amendthe13th@gmail.com, or contact us via Twitter @Amend_the13th, or via our Facebook page /Amendthe13th.

Join us!

It is our aim to pursue complete community participation in the various initiatives of the AIM, fostering a cultural transition to collective work and responsibility in every community where the AIM is organized.

The success of these efforts will be determined by our ability to educate, organize and mobilize the people to stand up and conquer their rights, to assume personal and collective responsibility for the empowerment of our own communities, our own futures, our own lives.

We encourage you to volunteer and financially support the Amend The 13th Autonomous Infrastructure Mission, whenever and however you can, at the local, state, and national level. Its success is dependent on you, the people. Thank you for your time.

Joka Heshima Jinsai
Executive Director

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Millions for Prisoners March

Updates

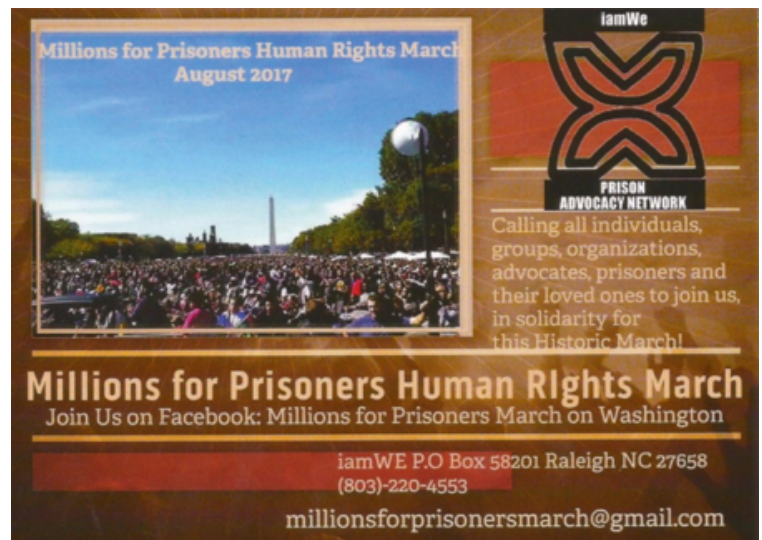
Here is a current list of local representation for the millions for prisoners' march stretching across all ends of the country from Washington State down to California and over to Florida.

Lancaster, CA
Los Angeles, CA
Riverside, CA
San Diego, CA
Santa Barbra, CA
Palmdale, CA
Tampa Bay, FL
Savannah, GA
Baton Rouge, LA
New Orleans, LA
Omaha, NE
Central New Jersey

Raleigh, NC
New York City, NY
Toledo, OH
Lancaster, PA
Northampton, PA
Mid-Point South Carolina
Houston, TX
Fredericksburg, VA
Richmond, VA
Seattle, WA
Spokane, WA
Washington D.C.

Mission Statement

WE SEEK TO UNITE ACTIVISTS, ADVOCATES, PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS, THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AS WELL AS ALL OTHERS COMMITTED TO THE FIGHT TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PRISONS AND THE PRISON SYSTEM, AND REPLACE THEM WITH MORE HUMANE AND EFFECTIVE SYSTEMS. OUR AIM IS TO EXPOSE THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION THAT IT TRULY IS. WE WANT TO CHALLENGE THE IDEA THAT CAGING AND CONTROLLING PEOPLE KEEPS COMMUNITIES SAFE. WE BELIEVE THAT FOR TOO LONG OUR NATION HAS RELIED UPON INCARCERATION AS A WAY TO SOLVE BROADER SOCIAL PROBLEMS, TO ITS DETRIMENT. IN AUGUST OF 2017, WE WILL MARCH ON WASHINGTON TO BRING WORLD ATTENTION TO THE CONTINUED SLAVERY AND INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE IN AMERICA, ENABLED BY THE 13TH AMENDMENT AND TO HIGHLIGHT THE EVER INCREASING MOVEMENT AGAINST THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.



Getting Involved Inside and Outside

Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

The Local organizing committees shall be comprised of various individuals and organizations situated in local communities throughout the country. The LOCs will provide direct interaction with members of its local community as it relates to the promotion, organization and mobilization for the Millions for Prisoners Human Rights March. The LOC will engage members of the local community, and provide education on the impacts of the 13th amendment of the U.S constitutions and other laws that contribute to mass incarceration in their communities.

Requirements:

1. Minimum of 3 participants to form a LOC- 1 member being the Local Representative
2. All participants must be in agreement to raise awareness and push the Millions for Prisoner Human Rights March agenda. Participants are responsible for connecting with organizations and recruiting new members

Prison Organization Committee (POC)

POCs are operated for the sole purpose to keep the prison population informed on accurate information related to the March. This will be done by direct contacts established by the National POC manager. Any prisoner can form a POC. The process is simple. You must write for an application from the National POC Project Manager. After filing the application, if approved, you will receive a certification letter.

Requirements:

1. It takes 3 prisoners to form a POC- 1 member being the POC manager
 2. All prisoners must be in agreement to raise awareness and push the Millions for Prisoner Human Rights March agenda. Participants are also responsible for recruiting new members.
-

Submission Info: In addition to publishing content raising awareness about the march and providing updates on demonstration progress, the No Shackles Newsletter also accepts work from prisoners in the form of articles, art and poetry. This March is about you and some of our most meaningful contributions come from the inside. We also accept submissions from friends and family members of prisoners. For readers interested in submitting their work: typed and printed can be sent to the return address or emailed to <millionsforprisonersmarch@gmail.com>; carbon copy: <amanisawari@gmail.com> Submissions should be marked Attn: No Shackles Newsletter
Facebook: Millions for Prisoners March on Washington



Millions for Prisoners Human Rights March

Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners

1. All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings.
2. There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
3. It is, however, desirable to respect the religious beliefs and cultural precepts of the group to which prisoners belong, whenever local conditions so require.
4. The responsibility of prisons for the custody of prisoners and for the protection of society against crime shall be discharged in keeping with a State's other social objectives and its fundamental responsibilities for promoting the well-being and development of all members of society.
5. Except for those limitations that are demonstrably necessitated by the fact of incarceration, all prisoners shall retain the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and, where the State concerned is a party, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights and the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as such other rights as are set out in other United Nations covenants.

6. All prisoners shall have the right to take part in cultural activities and education aimed at the full development of the human personality.
7. Efforts addressed to the abolition of solitary confinement as a punishment, or to the restriction of its use, should be undertaken and encouraged.
8. Conditions shall be created enabling prisoners to undertake meaningful remunerated employment which will facilitate their reintegration into the country's labor market and permit them to contribute to their own financial support and to that of their families.
9. Prisoners shall have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation.
10. With the participation and help of the community and social institutions, and with due regard to the interests of victims, favorable conditions shall be created for the reintegration of the ex-prisoner into society under the best possible conditions.
11. The above Principles shall be applied impartially.

iamWE Prison Advocacy Network
P.O. Box 58201
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